

October 2, 2016

## *I Want to Know Jesus*

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

Philippians 3:10-11

*"When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. Now Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his ministry."*

Luke 3:21-23

*"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry..."*

Luke 4:1-13

From his birth to the beginning of his ministry at age thirty we know very little about the life of Jesus. Luke shares one story, no doubt shared by Mary, detailing how Jesus went with his parents to the Passover Feast in Jerusalem when he was twelve. He stayed behind when they left and for three days they searched for him before finding him in the Temple grounds visiting with the teachers of the Law. At the conclusion of this account Luke tells us, *"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men."*

While we are given no more information about the next eighteen years we can surmise that Jesus upbringing was similar to that of most young men growing up in Palestine at that time. Jesus would have been trained by his father to be a carpenter and spent a great deal of those years learning and practicing his trade. It is likely his father passed away during these years. In addition, Jesus would have attended the Synagogue school learning the basics of the Law of Moses and the Jewish traditions.

At age thirty, the time when Jewish men were considered to have reached full adulthood, the Master makes his way to the Jordan River to be baptised by his cousin John, the baptizer. At this time Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit and begins his ministry. Following his baptism, Jesus is led into the desert where he fasts for forty days and we are told, is tempted by Satan.

This time of temptation and deprivation is common to many of those who became great prophets. During these forty days Jesus is tempted in the ways that all of us would be tempted. The Hebrew author writes, *"For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15)



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So, during those forty days, Jesus is tempted to gratify his basic human needs in unnatural ways. Satan tempts him to turn stones into bread so that he can eat, but the Master refuses, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, *"Man does not live on bread alone."* Like Jesus, you and I are constantly tempted to gratify our most basic human needs in ungodly and unnatural way and in doing so we sin. Jesus was tempted as well, but did not sin.

In much the same way, Satan tempts Jesus to trade his allegiance to God for all of the trappings of success in this world. Like us, our Lord is tempted to serve the gods of this world over the God of heaven. He responds with, ***"Worship the Lord your God and serve him only."*** (Deuteronomy 6:13)

And finally, Jesus is tempted, as we are, to test God's ability to deliver. The apostle Paul, for example, asks us, ***"Shall we go on sinning so that grace might increase?"*** (Romans 6:1-2) When we selfishly continue to sin, often intentionally, when we understand the cost that God has paid for our redemption we are testing God. In response to this temptation Jesus responds with, ***"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."*** (Deuteronomy 6:16)

The point is that Jesus was tempted to sin just like you and I are tempted. Because he was fully human he felt all of the power of the temptations that are common to us all. He knows every one of our struggles with sin, but unlike us did not choose to sin ever. The Hebrew author describes Jesus experience this way, ***"Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."*** (Hebrews 5:9)